

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

"That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic." James Connolly.

A Workers' Councillor for
the Old City



The Election and St. Mary's Pk.



ROSE COTTAGE



ECHOES FROM

— THE —

BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the 'Bottom Dog'—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

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MIKE MACK

Mike McMahon jinxed us, I think.
They the Gaels disgraced in '98
Gaels, there's nothing to compare
Mack—blasted and top dog!

Mike McMahon on McMahon,
Was a helpless dog, slow
He allowed his bad luck to run
For you see, "What you do?"

Mike Mack and me, we scared
Dad the taxman. If he struck
When the Bill was in the pipe
Mike McMahon's game was puked.

Mack, to-day, draws right, "Fatty"
Path to power to prove. "Hi and the
Big Dogs didn't know it early."
The dogs are "leaders" and "the Dog"

Mike may lead his own nation;
And, but our many things go wrong.
Transport strike—dig out miners;
The Trade Unions inside them strong.

Yesterdays—when draw pastime
Friend, money, games and girls
I'm a Tramp's lounge and trinkle
Get your books—will bring relief

now as today, not only in America, but in every country in Europe, ay even in our own country and our own city of Limerick. There is, fortunately or unfortunately, some instinct in man that looks for Leadership, that will respond to any popular catch-cry, and so long as this instinct is not suppressed, we may well thank God for it, but let us see where so-called Leaders or Giants landed us in 1918.

Internationally they have landed B.D.'s in the most disgraceful war that ever disgraced the pages of history and whether it be the Czar of Russia, King George of England, the Kaiser of Germany, Clemenceau of France, or Wilson of America, or any other giant, they have for their own capricious ends (while praising Liberty and self-government), set Bottom Dogs fighting each other, created widows and orphans by the million and flooded Democracy with War Loans which unless they have the good sense to repudiate them, will cripple generations yet unborn.

Socially what have our brave Labour Leaders done for us. Thomas of France, Henderson of England, the Social Democratic Leader of Germany, Austin America, Devin of Ulster! Sold their souls for a mess of porridge, sacrificed Trade Union rights won by years of fighting in work, been fooled up to eyes by the top dogs named above.

Educationally what have our Leaders who could not be named, done for us? Secured free (?) education for B.D.'s children, who are too starved in hundreds of cases to learn A.B.C., made what should be the noblest profession on earth, a hot bed of sweating white teachers hardly dare call them and their own filled children for every blind alley occupation, rather than something useful in life. crippled Technical Education which ought with democratic management, be made inseparable of our National Education.

Municipally where are we again? Slums for the B.D.'s sanitary accommodation missing. Public Health Acts suspended by Labour "Leaders" at the dictation of capitalists. 1812 houses in Limerick condemned as unfit for human habitation but quite good enough for 9000 B.D.'s.

And so we might go on but does it all lead us? Briefly just here—that we are all a pack of blind fools, and that Jim Laffey has not so much with Leaders who have fooled us as with us for being fooled. We have elected and paid men to think for us, politically, socially and every other way, instead of thinking for ourselves. It has been said that any Elected body never rises higher than the general level of the electors and if we take the British House of Commons, the French, German, or American Senates—or even the Dublin or Limerick Corporations we shall see how far we

have fallen. But the future lies with us, we can make of it what we will. Democracy has a magnificent opportunity of righting all wrongs, but it can be done only on one condition. We must give up this blind hero-worship, make short shift of all paid thinkers and begin to think for ourselves. We may not get another O'Connell, Wilson, Kaiser, King George, but if we get working men and women in the quiet of their own homes, in the workshops or in the Sinn Féin Clubs, thinking their own problems, finding out what they want and how to get it, we shall make more progress in 10 years than these Leaders have made in a hundred. We shan't all agree—God forbid that we should—but unless we always want to be stuck in the mud, let us in heaven's name make a start.

WORKERS OF IRELAND

(A.D.—O'Donnell Abu)

Workers of Ireland, why crouch ye like cravens?
Why clutch an existence of insult and want?
Why stand to be plucked by an army of ravens,
Or hoodwinked for ever by twaddle and cant?

Think of the wrongs ye bear,

Think of the rags ye wear,

Think of the insults endured from your birth;

Toiling in snow and rain,

Rearing up heaps of grain.

All for the tyrants who grind you to earth.

Your brains are as keen as the brains of your masters,
In swiftness and strength, ye surpass them by far;
You've brave hearts that teach you to laugh at disasters,
Ye vastly outnumber your tyrants in war.

Why, then, like cowards stand,

Using not brain or hand,

Thankful like dogs when they throw you a bone!

What right have they to take

Things that ye toil to make?

Know ye not, comrades, that all is our own?

Rise in your might, brothers, bear it no longer,
Assemble in masses throughout the whole land;
When workers and idlers confronted shall stand.

Through Castle, Court and Hall,

Over their acres all,

Onward we'll press like the waves of the sea;

Claiming the wealth we've made,

Ending the spoiler's trade,

Labour shall triumph and Ireland be free!

J. Connell

All is not Gold that Glitters. — The Gymkhana at the cricket grounds was a huge success (even in war times). The display of colour in dresses was pretty and, of course, à la mode. But there is another mode, i.e. the manner in which the dresses were made and the prices paid for them, and what percentage of that goes to the B.D. who has to content himself with a peep over the wall, not that the individuals who make the dresses ever get a glimpse at the fete; no poor unfortunate devils they have to toil and moil until long after the contestants have departed before they can put by their needle and depart home for a cup of tea and a piece of war bread. Physical energy too far gone to have a relish for anything else. The wage paid generally to dressmakers in the city is 7/- per week, hours 9 to 7, and often 10 o'clock on Saturday night. Disgraceful!

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MAKE NO MORE GIANTS GOD

Years ago, an American writer meditating on the wrongs of the Bottom Dogs and the prospects of righting them, prayed, "make no more Giants God, but elevate the race", and if there was need for that prayer in America, the Home of Freedom the Democrat's Paradise, years ago, how much

ROSE COTTAGE



The May edition of the "Limerick Socialist" contained an article giving the background to the dispute over the housing of a twenty-nine year old itinerant widow and her five children at Rose Cottage, at the Island Road, Limerick. After talks between representatives of the tenants of St. Mary's Parish, the Itinerant Settlement Committee and the Corporation on April 25th, it was agreed that the family would be allowed to move into the house after repairs had been carried out and some walls built at the rear of the house.

It was also agreed at this meeting that other itinerant families occupying a site on the Island Road would be moved to another site because of the health hazard being created. The tenants of Assumptio Park have stated "that these itinerant families might have moved onto the spacious yard at the rear of Rose Cottage if the agreement with the Corporation had not been reached."

The repairs to the house having been completed, the widow and her family agreed to move into the house on Wednesday May 22nd. However, in the early morning of the day before this move, Rose Cottage was destroyed by fire. The damage caused to the house has been estimated at between £1,500 and £2,000. Paint and wallpaper bought by the widow to re-decorate the cottage was also destroyed in the fire.

In a reply to a Limerick Leader editorial of May 25th, Stephen Gleeson, chairman of the St. Mary's Residents' Association stated:

It is erroneous to suggest that Rose Cottage became the centre of controversy because "it became part of a plan for the housing of itinerant families". Anyone with a passing knowledge of

this community would know that a total of nine itinerant families have been integrated in our immediate vicinity ... With regard to the housing of a widow and her children ... we promised our full co-operation and help to enable this mother to rear her children as members of this happy community. We are deeply saddened at the loss of this beautiful home which held so many memories for all of us. If there are "sick minds at large" they are most certainly not in this community ... we do more than just pay lip-service to the concept of Christianity with pious utterances. I would respectfully suggest that if all areas of our fair city were so tolerant the problem of the Itinerant Settlement Committee would be easily solved. In conclusion, we would like to add our voices to your request for a full investigation into the cause of the fire.

The police have carried out an investigation into the cause of the fire but the findings have not yet been released. It is also known that a row had taken place between the widow and some members of the itinerants from the Island Road site a few days before the fire started.

The homeless widow, whose husband was killed eight years ago in a family feud, has been offered other accommodation by the Corporation. Meanwhile, Rose Cottage remains a burnt-out shell, with the mystery of its burning still uninvolved. Considering the long list of applicants for local authority houses, the large numbers of people living in over-crowded and inadequate conditions, the destruction of this house can only be described as a vindictive and senseless act.

Kemmy for the council

**MAKE YOUR VOTE
TALK.
JIM KEMMY HAS A
STRONG VOICE –
AND THE ABILITY
TO USE IT.**

**LET HIM BE YOUR
VOICE ON THE
LIMERICK CITY
COUNCIL BY
GIVING HIM YOUR
No. 1 VOTE
ON JUNE 18th.**

A Workers' Councillor

For the first time in the history of Limerick politics a socialist worker, backed by a politically conscious group, has openly presented himself as a candidate at the local municipal elections. For the first time ever the people of the city have an opportunity of electing a genuine working class councillor to represent them on the Limerick City Council.

The decision of the Limerick Socialist Organisation to nominate its chairman, Jim Kenny, to contest the No. Two Electoral Ward is therefore an important step in the political development of the working class in Limerick. Despite the limitations in the powers of councillors and the undemocratic structure of local government the election offers a unique opportunity for political advancement.

On the City Council Jim Kenny will strive to use his position to defend and advance the democratic rights of the people. Backed by the Limerick Socialist newspaper he will be able to use it to expose and attack injustice and discrimination. With the support of the paper he will be able to operate as an outspoken, vigilant "watchdog" on all sections of local government in the city. With research and other assistance from his socialist colleagues outside the Council and working in close consultation with tenants and residents, he will be able to bring an uncompromised voice to Limerick public life.

Unlike his personal election "manifesto" presented to the candidates of the three main political parties Jim Kenny, as befitting a socialist candidate, has given a clear and comprehensive statement of his political position in his election literature. No other candidate in local political history has called for following policies:

- * The democratic settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict based on the right of the Northern Protestant people to opt for the state of their own choosing and the democratic rights of Catholics in the N.I. State.
- * The complete separation of Church and State
- * Full family planning facilities as a basic human and civil right
- * The democratic control and management of schools and colleges.

At local level Jim Kenny is seeking greater participation by the people in the work of the Corporation and the introduction of industrial democracy to all departments of local government.

All other candidates in Limerick have refused to state their policies on these vital and fundamental matters. These candidates are relying on their "personalities" and on the strength of their party machines to get elected. The representatives of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are straightforward upholders of capitalism and make no attempt to disguise their class position. The

Labour Party, having abandoned the pretence of the "Seventies will be socialist" policy, does not now claim to be a socialist party. However, many of its candidates still attempt to present themselves as the political representatives of the workers. The performance of the Labour Party on the Limerick City Council and on similar bodies throughout the rest of the country closely follows that of the Dublin Labour Party towards the end of the last century. On September 16th, 1899, James Connolly wrote:

We have no desire to carp at, or needlessly to criticise any party sailing under the banner of labour, but we feel we would not be performing our duty to the socialist working class of Ireland did we not point out the fact that the interests of labour are in no way involved in the contest. It could hardly be otherwise. It should be remembered that the Labour Party form a fraction of the Municipal Council. All of them hold the same beliefs as the remainder of the Municipal Council believe equally with them in the capitalist system, and that rent profit and interest are the necessary and inevitable pillars of society.

From the entry of the Labour Party into the Municipal Council to the present day their course has been marked by dissension, squabbling, and recrimination. No single important move in the interests of the worker was even mooted, the most solemn pledges were incontinently broken, and where the workers looked for inspiration and leadership, they have received nothing but despatchment and disgust ... We see in this contest ... not a fight between capital and labour but a sordid scramble for position between two sets of political wire-pullers, both equally contemptible.

In another article, Labour and Politics in Ireland, written in April 1910, Connolly wrote: "The Labour Party was a party only in name. It came to signify only certain men who could be trusted to draw working class support to the side of certain capitalist factions". The certain men who can be trusted to draw Limerick working class support to the capitalist policies of the Labour/Fine Gael alliance are Coughlan, Upper and all the other candidates going forward in the name of Labour.

The people of Limerick have often been maligned for being a backward, conservative lot. Any objective observer, who has lived in and out of Limerick, will testify that this picture is a false one. In general, the people in Limerick are no different from people in other parts of this country. The conservative image of the city has been largely earned by loud-mouthed spokesmen, lay and clerical, who projected themselves and their ignorant ideals as being generally representative of the entire local community.

As the local election campaign now enters its final phase the maturity and common sense of the

ordinary Limerick people is very much in evidence. It is obvious that a growing number of these people are demanding more enlightened and more committed public representatives. It is also obvious that they want a change away from the window-dressing and petty squabbling that passes for politics in Limerick.

The election campaign mounted on behalf of Jim Kenny has been led by local socialists and trade union activists and has been one of the most determined, best-organised efforts ever seen in a local election in Limerick. The election workers on the campaign team do not need market research consultants to interpret their findings on the canvass. The signs from the people living in Ward Two are definite and unmistakable: the opening of the ballot-boxes on June 19th will not only open the way for the election of a socialist councillor but also for a new era in the political development of the Limerick working class.

7 YEAR ITCH

Already during the local election campaign many people had commented on the apparent upsurge of activity being displayed by many of the outgoing members of the City Council. The spectacle of these Councillors rushing about their Wards like distraught animals, leaving a trail of promises behind them, is unlikely to fool the electorate. Councillors who had even failed to visit parts of their Wards are now, in the last days of the seven-year stints as public representatives, popping up like Rip Van Winkles in the most unfamiliar places.

It is obvious from the attitudes in many areas that people are not going to allow themselves to be hoodwinked by politicians suffering from the seven-year itch. What is needed is a new local government structure to enable all Limerick people to have direct access to the Corporation decision-making process as it affects their areas.

HELP

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Make sure of your copy of

THE

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

The voice of the worker

* One pound contribution ensures that you receive, post free, 12 months delivery

To Limerick Socialist Organisation
 33 Greenhill Road, Gortymon, Limerick

I enclose Postal Order/Cheque for £1, being my subscription for one year.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ELECTION MANIFESTO

KEMMY
FOR THE
COUNCIL

The Limerick Socialist Organisation has nominated its chairman, Jim Kemmy, to contest the local elections in Ward No. Two. No other candidate in these elections has a record of fighting for the people's interests to equal Jim Kemmy. For more than a decade he has been the most active and prominent trade unionist in Limerick. Over twenty-one years a trade unionist, he has served as secretary of the Limerick Branches of the Brick and Stonemasons' Trade Union for the past fourteen years. His efforts on behalf of his fellow workers in this field culminated in his election last year as president of the Limerick Council of Trade Unions, a position in which he was re-elected earlier this year.

Jim Kemmy works as a bricklayer with the Limerick Corporation. No other candidate in the elections has the same knowledge of the building industry, housing and maintenance as Jim Kemmy. He serves as secretary of the Limerick Building Trades' Group and also acts as joint secretary of the Area Joint Council for the Building Industry. His knowledge of housing and maintenance questions makes him the best equipped candidate in these areas. His election to the City Council will also be a preliminary step along the road to industrial democracy in Limerick.

Among the other trade union offices held by Jim Kemmy is the position of vice-president of the Delegate Board of the Mechanics' Institute.

This election is a vital one for all workers and trade unions in Ward No. Two. Their way forward is clear. They can help in the advancement of their interests by voting No. 1 for Jim Kemmy on June 18th.

Jim Kemmy is a member of one of the oldest families in Garryowen and continues to live in that part of the city. He has an unrivalled knowledge of Limerick working class history and is the historian of the Limerick Soviet. He has also written widely on notable local incidents and characters, including Michael Hogan and John Francis O'Donnell.

Jim Kemmy stands for the creation of a socialist society in which all the people can share in the country's wealth. He stands for a world in which poverty and injustice are replaced by co-operation and equality. He stands opposed to the present system of economic exploitation by which profit and privilege are placed before the interests of the people.

On the City Council Jim Kemmy will speak out fearlessly on all aspects of local government. He will demand greater democracy at community level to enable tenants and people buying their own houses to have a greater say in decisions affecting their area. He will press for changes in the existing local government structure to provide the people of Limerick with the opportunity to participate more in the work of the Corporation. He will seek the introduction of industrial democracy in the various departments of the Limerick Corporation to enable workers in these undertakings to take part in decision-making at all levels. He will demand that the highest priority be given to Housing Maintenance and Street Cleaning, to provide employment for more workers and a better service for the citizens. He will consult with and report to all interested people and bodies.

Jim Kemmy also supports the campaign for the extension of multi-channel television to Limerick.

NOTE: Because the Limerick Socialist Organisation is not registered as a political party, Jim Kemmy will appear as a "non-party" candidate on the ballot-paper. Your vote for Jim Kemmy will be cast as follows:

Name	Policy	Vote
Kemmy, Jim	Non-Party	1

If elected to the Limerick City Council, Jim Kemmy will continue to advocate the policies outlined in the "Limerick Socialist" newspaper over the past two-and-a-half years. As editor of this paper, he has attacked injustice and discrimination on all fronts and has helped to raise the political awareness of the people of Limerick concerning the present economic system.

Jim Kemmy is a former member of the Labour Party. During his membership of that party he spent three years as a member of the National Administrative Council and acted as chairman of its worker democracy policy committee. On a local level he served the party in many offices including chairman of the East Limerick Constituency Council, Director of Elections, Chairman of the Limerick City Divisional Council and secretary of the Michael Keay Branch. He left the party in January 1972 when he became convinced that it would not become socialist.

Over the last ten years Jim Kemmy has been involved in many debates and controversies in defence of democracy and social justice in Limerick. He has played a leading part in bringing about more open and tolerant attitudes in the city.

No other candidate in this election supports the following national policies being advocated by Jim Kemmy:

- * The deletion of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution.
- * The democratic settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict.
- * The recognition of the right of the Northern Ireland Protestant community to opt for the state of its own choosing.
- * The recognition of the democratic rights of the Catholic community in the Northern Ireland/United Kingdom State.
- * Full family planning facilities as a basic human and civil right.
- * The complete separation of Church and State.
- * The democratic control and management of schools and colleges at all levels to provide for greater participation by students, parents and the community in the determination of educational policies.



SPREADING THE MESSAGE

help
to elect
Limerick's
first ever
Socialist
councillor

The forthcoming local election, to be held on June 18th, presents the people of the No. 2 Ward with the opportunity of electing Limerick's first ever socialist councillor. To secure the election of Jim Kemmy to the City Council an intensive campaign must be mounted. To carry through this campaign the help, physical and financial, of all socialist supporters in Limerick is needed. All those wishing to assist with canvassing, posterizing, transport and subscriptions are requested to contact:

Jim Kemmy,
33 Greenhill Road,
Garryowen,
Limerick.

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RÁIMÉIS

By Dermot McEvoy

I think I had better explain how I come to be poking my nose into the affairs of the plain people of Limerick from my landsfall *in partibus* (any bishop will tell you what that means). Well, I had as a scholarship boy what passed for an education at St. Flannan's, Ennis, where I encountered the sons of the least successful Limerick grocers, drapers and hoteliers or, at any rate, the sons of the meaner ones. The fathers "who'd got on" dispatched their offspring to classier places like Clongowes or Castleknock. Additionally, my interest in Limerick springs from the fact that my late father, Andy, was editor of the *Limerick Leader* before the turn of the century, and, rather foolishly, attempted to use the paper as a tribune to defend what he regarded as the natural rights of the people against the then bishop, the remarkable E. T. O'Dwyer (Bishop O'Dwyer not only rode to hounds, but kept his own pack!). It was while researching those stirring days that a distinguished Irish journalist I'd been put into touch with by Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien sent me the *Limerick Socialist* and suggested that its editor could do with some help in his fight for the underdog.

Not far's eve, to the Limerick convention. A considerable number of my father's kinsmen with Bishop O'Dwyer were John McInerney, chairman of the Limerick Board of Guardians. So if any of you, my reader, are thinking of backing the fight for Seanad in Ireland you had better be prepared to stand up to rebukes like the one Bishop O'Dwyer administered to poor John McInerney. Said the bishop: "Does he think that because he has been elected to run a workhouse he can run a church?" Then there's another reason why I feel I should look into Limerick affairs: Thomas McInerney (Patrick), later to be my grandfather, was chairman of the Ennis Board of Guardians at the same time as McInerney (John) was in charge of "relief" in Limerick and the *Limerick Leader* devoted a leading article (Hancey that!) defending Patrick McInerney who had been fined half a guinea for being drunk and disorderly at Ennis railway station.

What incensed the *Limerick Leader* was that the whole case, as presented by a District Inspector of the R.I.C., showed that all my grandfather had been doing was shooting "Up Kruger!" But, of course, the Boer War was on and Limerick had just given the Freedom of the City to Maud Gonne (McBride) and Major McBride was helping the Boers! No alliance of the McEvoy's and the McInernneys was contemplated at the time which was just as well as my father's father, my paternal grandfather, was a District Inspector of the R.I.C. in Crossmolina! So, in an odd way for which I have no responsibility, I have, as Conor Cruise O'Brien puts it about his own upbringing, "a foot in both graves". Introductions over, let's move on.

Irish people I meet continually complain at the past being resurrected to make a point, but there is, in truth, no better way of understanding the present than to study the past. But, try to put it in the context of the past before an attempt is made

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LIMERICK SOCIALIST

to draw conclusions about to-day's problems. Ask yourself what has happened to Limerick and the *Limerick Leader* since its leading article in big bold type was headed VOTE FOR THE LABOUR COUNCILLORS and, when Labour triumphed, the new council was greeted as A PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT. The enemy then was British monied interests. Does it matter to the Limerick workingman that Irish monied interests are in charge to-day? And if there is any difference between a Limerick workingman and a London workingman it is only a degree of enslavement.

A British ex-soldier I know well, now working a 55-hour week driving heavy lorries hundreds of miles every night, wrote this reply to those supporters of Enoch Powell and "our British way of life" who attacked the unfortunate Asian immigrants:

If any Asian wants to come to Glasgow to stay in the broken-down rented slums in which the majority of us live, they must be either off their heads, or in even more dire straits than we are. The abominable conditions... have not changed much since the '30s and '40s. Then, there were hardly any coloured folk living here, so nobody could blame them for slums, overcrowding in schools, poor diets of the working class etc. In those days men like Enoch Powell walked into the comfort of an officers' mess in some place like Poona, not owing a shaker's curse for the conditions under which the working class lived.

They made jokes about it, suggesting that if we had baths in our houses we would probably keep coal in them. In my opinion, the ordinary man in the street has as much chance of getting social justice from the Enoch Powells of this land on the basis of being British as a tramp has of finding a free meal at Raffles Hotel in Singapore. All this talk about our British way of life fails to define the word "one", for there are two nations in Britain today - the nation of the rich with their polo matches, yachts at Cowes, jet flights in the pleasure boats of the world... and the nation of the poor like myself, living in dread of sickness or unemployment, realising that if such does happen I will go under a load of debt and my family will suffer deprivation.

For British, substitute Irish, for Raffles, substitute Cruise's. Should you hate the British? Perhaps, when you've dealt with the enemy in, say, O'Connell Street.

By now, you will have surely read in all the Irish papers (or heard from Irish pulpits) of "the disaster" that's facing Italy now that 59 per cent of the Italian people have voted in favour of divorce. I worry more about the 40 per cent that voted against divorce... who would not tolerate it, who considered it too dangerous for other Italians, even non-Catholic Italians. My sympathies are with the war pensioners who sat silently in one of Rome's main squares carrying banners - "Politicians: think of reforms, of pensions for the aged".

Ask your parish priest, or favourite Jesuit or Redemptorist, to preach hellfire against the exploiters of the poor, the sick and the aged. Who are they? Every shopkeeper in Limerick, every garage on the ways out. This would give our priests and bishops something to get their teeth into instead of bothering about what boys and girls do in laneways or the backs of motor cars. (For the record, I don't approve of promiscuity, but I know

it is and will be a waste of time preaching against it).

Incidentally, I don't know what religion is practised by the majority of people in Limerick these days but I am willing to bet St. Alphonsus's to a hayseed that we do it differently here in London. A while ago feeling in need of a rest from this often delightfully wicked world I phoned the J's at Farm Street to see if they could fix me up for a weekend retreat at Southwell House in Hampstead. But no, Southwell was no longer a retreat house, the nearest of their places was Birmingham.

When I demurred at travelling, the Jesuit I was speaking to suggested I should perhaps try the Vincentian Fathers' retreat house at Mill Hill in north-west London. At Mill Hill underground station I found a charming woman (a good-looker too) also on her way to the retreat - a mixed retreat for men and women and, as I learned, to my growing surprise, mixed also as regards brands of faith, Catholic, Protestant, Dissenter. Next shock was to discover that the man "giving the retreat" was not a Vincentian Father: it would be given by an Anglican doctor - a medical, not a spiritual doctor - who himself was a convert from Judaism to Christianity (if Anglicanism is Christianity: it used not to be in my day - "Proddy, woddy, ring the bell, bring the devils out of hell").

We did not have Confession; Mass (this was celebrated by a Vincentian, not by the medical doctor) was called "the Sacrament of the Eucharist" in deference to the Anglicans' feelings; and the Eucharist - in both forms - was given freely to all - Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter. I met a nun (RC), a late vocation, with whom I chatted about Irish affairs. She said with an air I thought of wistfulness that she had known Garret Fitzgerald at National and that he'd been a great one for the girls. The Anglicans assured me they would soon be taking over the RC Church in England and "bringing new life to it"; many of the RCs there told me with a singular lack of charity that the sooner the Lord called Cardinal Heenan the better, that he was blocking Christian unity with his "nonsense" about divorce and contraception, a more progressive man was wanted. The Archbishop of Canterbury, I ventured. Why not, they answered.

I don't think the retreat did me any positive harm and I think it would do Limerick Catholics a great deal of good. As I said, the RC religion is different here.

In the London Times birth notices: "A son, Michael Francis, born at Watford, Herts., to Pat (nee McGowan) and Frank O'Neill. Made in England." Now, this is taking disengagement with Ireland too far. Fancy depriving Ireland of even the vicarious thrill that went into Michael Francis's manufacture!

The next piece of Ráiméis will also be from "In partibus", but this time it will be from Brooklyn, the South Shore, New Jersey and Los Angeles. I am joining Liam Lenihan, uncle of the Senator Brian but by no means a supporter of his, to chew over old times. I have not seen him since St. Flannan's days.

INCOME TAX

THE SYSTEM THAT DISCRIMINATES IN FAVOUR OF THE RICH

There are a number of grounds on which the present income tax code can be seen to discriminate against the wage and salary earners of this country.

(1) The most obvious one is that the person paying PAYE tax has no loopholes - he is caught in the net, operated jointly by the Revenue Commissioners and the employers, and has no escape. Businessmen on the other hand are assessable under Schedule D, as it's called, and the first important difference is that the Revenue Commissioners accept the figures admitted by businesses or their accountants as their true profit. It is obvious that the figures will be related directly to the honesty or otherwise of the businessman and it is clear that a lot of them seriously understate their profits. The Revenue Commissioners have attempted to properly operate the system in the circumstances, and Government policy continues in ensuring that the person who pays tax under the PAYE system bears an unfair proportion of the tax burden.

(2) Another difference and one that is slightly in the advantage of those who are assessed under Schedule D is that their income for assessment is the income of the previous year whereas PAYE taxpayers are taxed on their actual income of the year. In an inflationary period with profits and wages rising the same, it is often that any increase in business profit has the benefit of being taxed at 199% (i.e. for investment purposes) for a year rather than 100% if any rate the reduced proportion of the actual tax.

(3) The allowances for allowable expenses are much more generous for the PAYE taxpayer than for his counterpart the professional man or self-employed person. Various automobile benefits get an income claim that for instance the bulk of theseallowing expenses are for business use whereas of the ordinary employed citizen effort attempts to claim expenses for work is a non-negotiable claim and this is blatantly unfair.

(4) Furthermore the longer you are older you can defer payment of tax. There is a complicated appeal procedure for the self-employed which can and does prevent the payment of tax for the wealthy who can afford to pay accountants to look after their affairs. Whilst the ordinary PAYE taxpayer is now paying income tax on his current 1974-75 earnings, in many cases it can be assumed that the rich are still successfully holding up payments of say 10,737 £ tax.

(5) Much has been made of the recent Budget and the Coalition Government would have us believe that they have carried out a major reform of the tax system. This is patently false, as any analysis of Ryan's proposals will reveal.

Even the official figures produced do not make for exciting reading:

Earnings	Old System (2 children under 11; I over 11)	New System	Tax Savings
£ 1,500	£ 86.15	£ 36.00	£ 40.15
£ 2,000	£ 197.40	£ 156.00	£ 41.40
£ 2,500	£ 372.40	£ 286.00	£ 86.40
£ 3,000	£ 599.90	£ 420.50	£ 179.40
£10,000	£4,283.70	£3,883.00	£320.70

The above illustrates the income tax payable under old and new systems on earnings of a married person with three children. But this poor and all as it is fails to present a true picture of the situation. A single person for instance would at the very best, and regardless of whereabouts on the pay scale he stood, would fare even a lot less well in terms of tax savings than the married man above.

Earnings	Old System	New System	Tax Savings
£2,500	£595.35	£560.50	£34.85

On figures of this nature £30/£40 a year for a sizeable proportion of the working population be regarded as a major reform? Spread out over 52 weeks the "reform" is totally inadequate even to keep pace with inflation. It should also be pointed out that Mr. Ryan was *forced* to avoid mentioning

that in a sizeable number of cases the tax saving will be reduced even further than the official figures demonstrate. The people who are hit hardest here are those whose earnings are £2,000 or less, a little over that by reducing the lowest tax rate to 26p in the £ for all taxpayers - why didn't he have done this and given wealthy shareholders etc. a greater increase than those struggling on subsistence wages? In fact reduced the rate of relief for a wide range of personal tax allowances. Mortgage or bank loan interest (a very sizeable slice of many young married couple's earnings at today's interest rates), contributions to the VHL, superannuation, social welfare, life assurance policies etc. now get relief at the rate of 26p in the £, whereas previously they obtained relief at the rate of 35p in the £.

An Irish Press article by Michael Conway on 10th April took as an example Mr. Ryan's hypothetical £5,000 a year family man. Assume he has a new £5,000 mortgage (interest repayments at £1,400.250 per annum) which would qualify for 10% relief, could also be paid into a 5% superannuation fund, pay £50 to the VHL and has 15% relief £50 for Life Ass. policies, and £80 for allowable expenses. His total tax allowance ignoring his married and child allowances is £802.50. When those received relief at 35p in the £, they were worth £1,237 to the individual. Now, under the new system, they are only worth £1,290.25 to him. This difference of £72.32 is the cost of reforming the tax system that Ryan did not refer to in his speech.

Another important aspect of the Budget proposals was the abolition of Earned Income Relief. Not only does this knock the good out of the increased personal allowances, and incidentally remove one of the few tax incentives for the wage-earner, but it substantially improved the tax position of those living off unearned income investments in stocks and shares, deposit accounts, etc.)

To take an example:

Old System	New System
Unearned Income £2,000	£2,000
Personal Allowance £ 290	£ 500
Taxable @ 35p £1,701	£1,500
£ 595.35	£ 390

Therefore the person who doesn't have to lift a finger but derives his income from investments saves in this instance £205.35p. Here indeed is a major tax reform! And one that discriminates viciously against the person who has to earn his money by the sweat of his brow. Compare the substantial savings here of the parasite who lives off invested capital (extracted from the surplus value produced by the workers) against the measly £50/£40 given to a worker who has to earn every penny of his £2,000.

It is palpably clear that the so-called reforms of Ryan's budget are but a drop in the ocean and are merely tinkers with a system that needs a complete overhaul.

This is the key point - the income tax system operated by the government is essentially one which favours the bosses. Whilst it is true that the paperwork involved in keeping the PAYE system on the rails is increasingly becoming a burden for the employers, nonetheless they continue to operate the onerous task - and the essential reason is that the tax collected through PAYE is largely responsible for keeping the spotlight off the bosses and the understatement of profits that they can consequently get away with.

Therefore the struggle for a just tax system must be seen in the context of the overall struggle for a socialist society. In this regard the trade unions must be drawn into the forefront of the struggle. In the past trade unions have shown a narrow, blinkered attitude towards the aspirations and needs of their members. It is now increasingly realised that it is no good to bargain for increased wages without having regard to the proportion of the negotiated increase that will be swallowed up in taxation.

In more practical terms what should be the immediate demands of the PAYE taxpayer?

(1) A campaign should be initiated which would demand that the PAYE taxpayer have the same basis of assessment as those taxed under Schedule D. Whilst this point might prove difficult to grasp for the ordinary worker, nonetheless there would be a quite useful tax saving involved. It would be a demand that could be pressed forward in the interests of simple justice.

(2) A less obvious but very vital reform would be a campaign to insist on adequate staffing to properly supervise the operation of the taxes that relate to businesses and professional people. It is not sufficiently widely appreciated that the staff available to the Revenue Commissioners is totally inadequate to cope with the volume of work involved, and that in regard to the taxes which require technical expertise (i.e. the non-PAYE taxes), there is a prevailing attitude of just accepting any old thing as there is no possibility open to the staff of checking the veracity or otherwise of the accounts submitted. Especially with regard to the new taxes it should be insisted that additional staff be recruited, otherwise evasion will be widespread and the effect of the taxes will be minimal.

(3) The commitment of the Minister for Finance to progressively review the income tax allowances must be constantly borne in mind. The new demand should be something like: minimum allowance for a single person £1,000 for a widow(er) £1,200 and for a married person £1,600 (or more, of course). These are minimum demands.

(4) Penalties for evasion should be penal, and the derisory present level of fines should be revised completely.

Letter to the Editor

The Election

Bengal Terrace
Old Cork Road
Limerick

June 4th, 1974

The Editor
"Limerick Socialist"
Greenhill Road
Garryowen,
LIMERICK.

Dear Sir,

I was strolling through Nicholas Street in the Parish the other day on my way to the Clare Hills when I met an old friend of mine from St. Mary's Park. He was carrying a bulging plastic bag and was surrounded by four or five young children. We exchanged greetings and then I asked him what was in the bag. He opened it to reveal some well-worn bathing trunks, a towel and a large bar of soap.

"I'm just taking the kids down to the river for a bath", he told me.

"Down to the river for a bath?" I said, surprised.

"Oh yes", he said. "We do have to go to the Shannon Fields for a bath all the time. As you know yourself most of us have no bathrooms in the Island Field."

"Bit on the cold side for bathing in the Shannon, isn't it?" I suggested.

"Tis all 'all" he agreed, "but what else can we do? We have to keep the children clean somehow."

"But the Island Field was the very first Corporation estate to be built way back in the Thirties, wasn't it?" I said. "You'd think they'd have put bathrooms in there by now."

"Well now you're talking", said my friend. "If promises had any weight at all Limerick would have capsized years ago. The local elections are on again after a gap of seven years and we have all the clever boozers coming around knocking on the doors looking for our votes. They've suddenly remembered that the Island Field is still stuck down there in the corner of King's Island where they hid it away in the first place. Your man (he mentioned the name of a well-known Councillor) came knocking on my door the other day asking me if I'd vote for his party. 'God', says I to him, 'you got very grey since I last saw you'. And he did! He had aged seven years."

I ask you, My Editor, can this man be blamed for his cynicism? Suddenly with the local elections only a couple of weeks away, every Councillor in Limerick has rediscovered his constituents. And (can there be any doubt about it?) as soon as the elections are over they will be forgotten just as suddenly.

One such Councillor who recently rediscovered

the Island Field now tells the prospective voters (with the help of some well-placed Press releases) that he is going to persuade the Corporation to spend no less than half a million pounds on that sadly-neglected estate! Another City Father, with exquisite timing, has just plucked up the courage to tell us that itinerants should be "disciplined" and that he would not like to have any of them living near him until they ARE disciplined. Interesting, isn't it, that this bold declaration was not made until AFTER Rose Cottage was burned down? We are also promised a new body to promote live theatre in Limerick Fine. And whilst the showmen are posing for photographs in the foyer of the City Theatre, that man from St. Mary's Park will still be taking his children down to the river for a wash.

If only we vote for the right people, every pot hole in every street in Limerick will be filled in overnight, every leaking roof will be re-slated; every dangerous road junction will be miraculously rendered safe; we shall have so many new swimming pools and other recreational facilities that there will be no room left to build houses; and (the most cynical promise of all) "politics" will be taken out of Local Government. What do these Councillors take the people of Limerick for? Do they think the citizens are as simple-minded as themselves?

If I were asked to define the Average Councillor, I should do so as follows: "The Average Councillor is a man who considers it imperative for his own survival that injustice against his constituents be perpetuated and that they be deprived of some of their basic rights as citizens, so that he, the Councillor, may be seen to fight on their behalf without necessarily winning and so retain his position of power."

Well, where does all this leave us? It leaves us searching in the gloom for a man of special calibre, a man of honesty and sincerity. A man who will refuse to play at compromise policies in order to win votes. A man who would rather win no votes at all than to tell lie or deceive the people. After all the years of cynicism and stagnation, I believe that there is at last and for the very first time, such a man contesting the local elections in Limerick City. That man is Jim Kemmy.

Jim Kemmy's record of service is there for all to see. He has for years worked tirelessly for the people of Limerick, both as a leading trade unionist and as, simply, a concerned neighbour. His spare time in recent years has hardly been his own, such have been the demands made on him by fellow-citizens who, weary of the apathy of their elected representatives, have taken their problems to his front door in the confident knowledge that every effort would be made to help them.

Jim Kemmy's honesty and refusal to compromise can never be called into question. In the very same issue of the "Limerick Socialist" that he announced his candidature for the Limerick City Council, he also proceeded, quite

fearlessly, to demolish some of the sacred cows of our society, knowing, as he must have done, that he would be upsetting a lot of people. There is not a Councillor or a T.D. in Limerick who would have had that kind of courage. There can be no doubt that if Jim Kemmy is elected, the Limerick City Council will never be the same again. The cosy, back-slapping, club atmosphere will be gone, and behind-the-scenes "deals" and "arrangements" to keep the boat from rocking will be a lot harder to get away with.

Of course Jim Kemmy isn't perfect. In fact, he has one almost fatal fault for a politician. He is just TOO HONEST.

Yours faithfully,

SEAN BOURKE

ERSE IN 'ERNEST'

On an earlier trip I was held over a few hours in Ireland, on the River Shannon, not far from Limerick, having flown in from Lisbon on the way to England. I looked up the hill and saw a attractive schoolhouse. With Douglas Poteat lawyer-economist, I climbed the boggy path to the school. It was a three-class-room building. Up to eight, eight to twelve, and twelve on. There were two teachers. We went into the room for the eight-to-twelves, where a tall, twinkled-eyed, middle-aged man, with rod in hand, was giving instruction. After the usual introduction, we're from New York, etcetera, I asked why he taught Erse in these days of a dream of Basic English. Obviously to this man, dedicated to teaching — and a good job he did, I'm sure — the purpose of Erse was to educate the people of Southern Ireland to isolationism. A separate language did more for nationalism than a flag or national anthem or salute.

When we were about to leave, the teacher's fifteen-year-old daughter appeared on the scene with her father's lunch, not much, but well wrapped. We walked down to the little village with this bright, sharp Irish girl and her friend. "Why do you hate the English?" was my opener. "No such thing," came the answer. "I have a brother in the R.A.F., and next month I'm going to London to work as a secretary. I can do better than here. I can get two pounds a week to start with".

I made inquiries and found that a high proportion of Southern Ireland men were in the British military services and many more working in the war factories of England and Scotland. But still it's the same problem. No matter what the historic causes, religious or racial nationalism has made and still makes irrational, cruel and costly enemies of mankind. Southern Ireland wants to own Protestant Northern Ireland. I tried to find a rational for this desire. According to the census of 1937, about one-third of the population of Northern Ireland is Catholic. Do they get shabby treatment? Are they not serviced by police and garbage collectors and roads just the same as the rest of the population? The mass of people, as distinguished from the leaders, had no answer to these queries. As for the leaders, I suspect they are concerned primarily with a yen for power and political campaign issues. And so Ireland is torn with dissension which throttles all progress.

"The Best Is Yet" by Morris L. Ernest, 1947 edition.

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